

UNDER HIS WINGS

Message by Willis E. Bishop

Psalm 57:1 Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me!
 For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow
 of Your wings I will make my refuge until
 [these] calamities have passed by.

"And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge." What a beautiful, comforting statement!

This statement occurs only four times in Scripture, in the Psalms, and it is always by King David.

Its first use is in Psalm 17:8 and 9. It is a prayer by David when he is surrounded by enemies. In verse 9 he laments, "the wicked ... oppress me," "the enemies ... surround me." And so David prays in verse 8: "Hide me in the shadow of Your wings."

Its second use is in Psalm 36:7. David is thinking about how good the Lord is, and in verse 7 he says, "How precious is Your loving kindness, O God. Therefore, the sons of men put their trust in the shadow of Your wings."

The third use is in Psalm 57:1. The heading to this Psalm indicates that this was how David felt "when he fled from Saul (king of Israel) into the cave." David fled from Saul twice.

The first time (1 Samuel 21) David fled and went to Achish, king of Gath. The servants of Achish recognized David and captured him. David feigned madness, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let saliva run down his beard. Achish said, "I don't need a madman." So David escaped to hide in the cave of Adullam.

In 1 Samuel 24, the second time, David (and his men) hid from Saul in a cave in Ein Gedi. Saul also came into the cave, not knowing David was further in. Secretly, David cut off a corner of Saul's robe. After Saul left the cave David called out to him to show that he (David) could have killed Saul but did not wish to do so.

On which of these two occasions did David write Psalm 57? I do not know. In either case, David, in a life-threatening situation, looks to God and writes:

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my
soul trusts in you. And in the shadow of Your wings
I will make my refuge.

The fourth use of the phrase "in the shadow of Your wings" is found in Psalm 63:7. The heading to this psalm says that David wrote it "when he was in the wilderness of Judah," and he was then king of Israel. From the mention of the wilderness in 2 Samuel 15:23, it seems most likely this was the time David was fleeing from his son

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Absalom. Absalom by treachery had "stolen the hearts of the men of Israel" and had raised a rebellion against his father, David. In order to save the people and the city of Jerusalem, and not fight against his son, David fled to "the wilderness."

Believe it or not, after all David's troubles he could pen in verse 7: "Because You have been a help to me, therefore, in the shadow of Your wings I rejoice"!

Now an application for us today.

"In the shadow of Your wings" is the precious thought of God's sheltering care for His own, just as a hen gathers her brood of chicks under her wings in times of danger. David in his psalms reminds us of the rich mercy of God toward us, His protective care, and the passing of the problems of life.

Those who have put their trust in the loving Savior Jesus Christ can know that the present calamities will not last. Either the cloud will be lifted or we will pass through the cloud to be with Christ, which is far better!

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